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Letter dated 28 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to inform you of a serious incident, which is of great concern to my Government. On 13 December 2000, Mr. Panicos Tsiakourmas, a Greek Cypriot, was abducted as he was waiting in his car, within the British Sovereign Base Area, for Turkish Cypriot workmen to drive them to their workplace. According to the relevant Sovereign Base Area Police report, Mr. Tsiakourmas was dragged out of his car and forcibly led to the occupied areas. A few moments after he was abandoned there, the so-called "Turkish Cypriot Police" arrived at the spot and arrested him on charges of alleged drug possession. He was then led in front of an illegal court, which ordered his detention until the holding of a so-called trial at the end of February 2001.

It should be underlined that Mr. Tsiakourmas has no criminal history whatsoever and no known involvement with drugs of any kind. This is also confirmed by the Sovereign Base Area Police report mentioned above.

It is important to note that his abduction took place only a few days after a Turkish Cypriot drug dealer was arrested by the competent police authorities of the Republic of Cyprus, while trying to sell drugs to undercover police agents. The abduction therefore was a provocative act taken in retaliation for the arrest of the drug dealer and is tantamount to hostage-taking and a terrorist act.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus strongly condemns the abduction of Panicos Tsiakourmas by the illegal regime and demands his unconditional and speedy release.

There is also no doubt that Turkey must be held responsible for the illegal actions and provocations perpetrated by the illegal regime. In this respect, I would remind you that in the decision of the European Court of Human Rights of 18 December 1996, in the Loizidou case, the Court decided that "... it is obvious from the large number of (Turkish) troops engaged in active duties in northern Cyprus that her (Turkey's) army exercises effective overall control over that part of the island. Such control ... entails her (Turkey's) responsibility for the policies and

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actions of the 'TRNC'". In the same decision, the Court labelled the illegal Turkish Cypriot regime as "a subordinate local administration (of Turkey)". The abduction and detention of an innocent civilian, who was actually helping in the employment of Turkish Cypriots, negatively affects intercommunal contacts. Furthermore, it constitutes a grave violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and a host of other international instruments to which Turkey is a party.

Under the circumstances, my Government expects that you will use your influence and that the United Nations will intensify its efforts, put pressure on Turkey to effect the immediate release of Panicos Tsiakourmas and send the strong message that blackmail and terrorist acts are not condoned.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sotirios **Zackheos**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative